

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
AD HOC STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, January 28, 2016
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
23 Royce Circle**

4:00 PM

DRAFT Minutes

Members Present: Steve Bacon, Tom Callahan, Matt Hart, Philip Lodewick (by phone), Betsy Paterson, and Diana Pelletier

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

Guest: Francine Christiansen with Christiansen Consulting

1. Overview of Strategic Planning Process

The meeting started at 4:03 pm.

Francine Christiansen referred to a Power Point presentation as a guide for the discussion of the Partnership's strategic plan.

She commended the Partnership for its success and the strong partnerships it has built.

The key questions she identified to frame the strategic planning process are:

- What is the Partnership's role in the downtown?
- How do you assure the Partnership's sustainability and communicate relevance to stakeholders?
- How do you get "customers" to come and why?

She asked the Steering Committee if there were any other framing questions.

Betsy Paterson said she thought a key question was how to get buy-in from the downtown businesses about the relevance and importance of the Partnership.

Matt Hart said another key question would be to evaluate the Partnership's role in other areas of town.

The Steering Committee was ok with the timeline as presented. Ms. van Zelm noted that she spoke with Partnership Attorney John Zaccaro and there will still be a need for the Partnership to hold an annual meeting in June per its Bylaws. Some Board members' terms expire on June 30, 2016 so they would need to be re-elected or new members would need to be nominated. The Bylaws allow for special meetings of the members to be called and this could be done for a fall meeting where potential Bylaws and Board member changes could be presented.

Ms. Christiansen then reviewed what she sees as the steps in strategic planning.

2. Review list of those to interview and Board/Partner Questionnaire

The Committee reviewed both the Board and Partner questionnaire. The Committee made suggested changes to both questionnaires. Ms. Christiansen noted that she will be requesting that the Board fill out their questionnaires but the Partner questionnaire is a guide for an interview she will conduct with identified partners. She will also adjust each questionnaire for the particular partner to ensure the interview is as helpful as possible for the strategic planning process.

Ms. van Zelm and Ms. Christiansen will work on the partner list and send it and the two revised questionnaires back out to the Committee for its review before proceeding with interviews.

Ms. Christiansen said she will also talk to peers of the Partnership – Blue Back Square, Riverfront Recapture – and to the CT Main Street Center. A few of those interviews are scheduled for February 1.

3. Recap: Stated priorities aligned with Main Street Model

The Committee reviewed a draft of a planning framework which identified the current priorities of the Partnership. Other priorities may come out of the strategic planning process. Ms. Christiansen modelled the framework on the national Main Street 4 point approach model. Are the current Partnership committees the best committees?

Tom Callahan also suggested adding the words “activator” and “broker” to describe the Partnership. Mr. Hart noted that the Partnership’s skills in grant writing should also be included.

The Committee also reviewed the draft Key Strategic Partner Worksheet. Ms. Christiansen said the Worksheet would be used as an exercise for the future Board/staff retreat. Philip Lodewick suggested deleting the “What is in it for the Partnership factor” as he thought it was superfluous.

Mr. Hart left the meeting at 5:15 pm.

4. Discussion of February Board meeting presentation

The Committee recommended that the Board meeting include an introduction of Ms. Christiansen’s background; a summary of the process; the framing questions; and the timeline.

The presentation should include an overview of what is needed from the Board now and in the future.

5. Strategic Discussions

Ms. Christiansen asked if there were specific deliverables desired from the strategic planning process. Ms. Paterson said she wants to determine the best way to meet the Partnership’s vision for the downtown.

Ms. van Zelm said she thought the governance piece (Board/committee structure, staffing, funding) was critical, especially as it was identified but not fully addressed in the last strategic planning process.

Mr. Bacon said it will be important to develop benchmarks for success. Ms. Christiansen said her goal will be to develop success indicators and the cost to meet those benchmarks.

Mr. Callahan said it is important to capture the story graphically. He has some examples which he will send to Ms. Christiansen and Ms. van Zelm.

6. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.